

THE SISTERS.

BY JOHN G. WHITTELL.

Annie and Rhoda, sisters twin,
Woke in the night to the sound of rain.
The rush of wind, the rattle of rain,
Of great waves climbing a rocky shore.

Annie rose up in her bed gown white,
And looked out into the storm and night.
"Hush, and harken?" she cried in fear,
"Hearst thou nothing, sister dear?"

"I hear the sea, and the dash of rain,
And roar of the northeast hurricane.
Get thee back to the bed so warm,
No good comes of watching a storm."

What is it to thee, I fear I would know,
That waves are roaring and wild winds blow?
No lover of thine's afloat to miss
The harbor-lights on a night like this?

"But I hear a voice cry out my name,
Up from the sea, on the wind it came.
Twice and thrice have I heard it call,
And the voice is the voice of Estwick Hall!"

On her pillow the sister tossed her head,
"Hall of the 'Heron' is safe," she said,
"In the tautest schooner that ever swam
He rides at anchor in Annapolis."

And, in peril from swamping sea,
Or lee-ward rocks, would he call on thee?
But the girl heard only the wind and tide,
And wringing her small white hands, she cried:

"O sister Rhoda, there's something wrong;
I hear it again, so loud and long.
'Annie! Annie!' I hear it call,
And the voice is the voice of Estwick Hall!"

Up sprang the elder, with eyes aflame;
"Thou liest! He never would call thy name.
If he did, I would pray the wind and sea
To keep him forever from thee and me!"

Then out of the sea blew a dreadful blast;
Like the cry of a dying man it passed.
The young girl hushed on her lips a groan,
But through her tears a strange light shone—

The solemn joy of her heart's release
To own and cherish his love in peace.
"Dearest," she whispered, under breath,
"Life was a lie, but true is death."

The love I had from myself away
Shall crown me now in the light of day.
My ears shall never to wooer list,
Never by lover my lips be kissed.

Sacred to thee am I henceforth,
Thou in heaven and I on earth!"
She came and stood by her sister's bed:
"Hall of the 'Heron' is dead," she said;

"The wind and the waves their work have done,
We shall see him no more beneath the sun.
Little will he seek that heart of thine,
It loved him not with a love like mine."

I, for his sake, were he but here,
Could he and 'brother bid her gear,
Though hands should tremble and eyes be wet,
And stitch for stitch in my heart be set.

But now my soul with his soul I wed:
Thine the living, and mine the dead!"
Atlantic Monthly.

A DINNER OF HERBS.

Between eight and nine o'clock on a fine September morning, a young married couple stood together at the window of a charming little house, pleasantly situated at Norwood.

The neatly-appointed breakfast equipage had not been as yet removed by the spruce maid-servant, but the meal had concluded, and the master of the little cottage was about to take his departure by train for the scene of his daily labors.

Robert Denwillow was only a solicitor's confidential clerk, on a salary of rather less than the much-abused three hundred pounds per annum; yet he contrived to find life very tolerable on the whole. He was a fine, honest-faced, stalwart person, about thirty-two or three, who loved his friends, his old mother and sisters, and adored his pretty, spoilt, willful, loving wife—a bright-eyed, petulant, chirping little woman, ten years his junior.

The morning was splendid; the room was cheerful, the servant maid brisk and willing, and the eggs and rashers had been unexceptional, the coffee clear, the rolls crisp, and the butter, really butter. Yet for all that, as she stood amid the flowers in her bay-window—herself in her white dress and blue ribbon—the most attractive object there—was a sullen pout on Selina Denwillow's pretty mouth that was not pleasant to see.

"Come, dear, I must go in two minutes," said her husband. "I think I shall be home early to-day. You promised me a roast leg of pork, you know."

"And you promised me that gray moire antique at Swan & Edgar's," retorted the lady, sulkily.

"But, Lina, dear, I had no notion *moire* was so expensive. Why, they wanted twenty guineas for it!"

"Well! Why, it is the twelfth part of our whole year's income."

"But if it was to please me?"

"To please you? I would make a good many sacrifices, you know well, dear Lina; but if I were to try to please you at that rate I should soon be in the Bankruptcy Court."

Lina tossed her golden head contemptuously.

"Besides, what does my little wife want with such superb fabrics?" said her husband, laughing. "No, no, Lina. Leave *moire* to duchesses. I like you in your white muslin. There, I must go! Give me a kiss, and don't forget the pork. Bye-bye! You'll be better tempered when I come home, poppie."

And whistling cheerily, away hurried Robert Denwillow to catch the train to London bridge.

Like most of her sex, Lina could have borne any opposition better than her husband's imperturbable good temper. She was out of humor, and she knew it. She wanted to quarrel, and she would quarrel, and she could not, because it takes two parties to a quarrel, and her husband had not afforded her the slightest excuse for giving way to her ill-humor.

No sooner was he fairly out of sight than the little woman rang the bell furiously.

"Ann!"

"Yes, ma'am."

"When the green-grocer calls, turnips and potatoes."

"Yes, ma'am."

"And when the butcher calls, a leg of mutton for boiling."

"And there was a malicious twinkle in Mrs. Denwillow's eyes."

Ann opened her mouth wide with astonishment.

"Yes, ma'am. I thought master said something about roast pork."

"Never mind what your master said—"

"But, ma'am," remonstrated Ann, boldly, "master can't bear boiled mutton, and then I've got the onions for the stuffing."

"Put on your bonnet immediately, Ann, and go to the Italian warehouse, and order a bottle of capers."

"And with a look of dismay Ann vanished."

"Oh, my! I can't see a turtar!" muttered she, as she quitted.

Mrs. Denwillow watched her servant close the door, and then smiled triumphantly.

"There!" exclaimed she, in such a tone as Alexander the Great might have adopted after a victorious victory; "there! I think I've done it now!"

OUR PREMIUMS.

BY JOHN G. WHITTELL.

gone. She was now seriously alarmed. Thrice had she descended to the kitchen to confer with Ann, each time less angrily and more anxiously, and she was already thinking of paying her servant another visit, when Ann herself, with a hasty and concerned knock, entered the parlor. The girl looked hurried and alarmed.

"Oh, if you please, ma'am, you're not to be frightened, but Mr. Hodges, the station-master, has sent up to say there's an accident on the line."

"What!" screamed Lina, pale as death, and with an awful sinking of the heart.

"A Crystal Palace train have run into the forty-third, please, ma'am, and seventeen persons are killed, and many wounded. It's near New Cross, ma'am. These accidents is always near New Cross."

"Oh!" sobbed poor Mrs. Denwillow. "I've lost the best husband—my poor Robert! And I so loved him. Oh! oh!"

"Law, no, if you please, ma'am, master isn't killed. Here's Mr. Hodges said I was to give you. It ought to have come an hour and a half ago, but were delayed in the confusion. Then 'grams always is delayed somehow," added Ann, soliloquizingly.

Lina seized the paper, and tore it open. It read thus:

"DARLING! Don't be alarmed. Frightful accident at New Cross. Am making myself useful to sufferers. Shall take cab home. Don't wait dinner."

In the intense relief of her heart, Lina sobbed convulsively, and made an inward vow never to be so perturbed and exacting in future. In a mood of mad rejoicing, she sat upon the sofa, forming a host of good resolutions, until the sound of cab-wheels fell fully on her ears.

In two minutes more Robert Denwillow was in the parlor, clasping the penitent little woman in his arms.

"Oh, Bob, dear, I'm so sorry! And I've been so frightened! I'll never be so cross again!" sobbed she.

The husband stroked her fair hair tenderly, but did not reply. He judged it better to let her tears have their course. At last he said:

"Well, dear, it's all right now, so let us go to dinner."

"Oh, those poor people killed! I couldn't eat any dinner."

"Nonsense, there were no people killed; only a score of broken arms and legs."

"Why," exclaimed the little woman in surprise, "Ann told me there were seventeen persons killed!"

Robert Denwillow laughed.

"These sort of things are always grossly exaggerated," he said. "But come, I want my dinner—odd! I don't perceive the onions."

"Oh, Bob, dear!" sighed his wife, coming to the roots of her hair, "I—I'm so sorry, but there's nothing but b—b—boiled mutton for dinner."

The good fellow winced for a moment, but he comprehended in an instant how matters stood, and said, "Well, dearest, a certain grand old book says, 'Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than—'"

Lina kissed him impetuously.

"You are an angel, Robert—a good man—and I am a wicked, wicked little thing!"

"Not wicked, pet!" said he, earnestly, as she hung round his neck, "bear with me, and forgive me."

"Forgive you, my darling!" said her husband, returning her caresses. "Have we not all need of forbearance and forgiveness?"

"Dinner's ready, please sir," cried Ann, entering, with a covert smile on her face.

"Well, Ann," returned her master, good-humoredly, and as he boiled mutton were his favorite food, "I am hungry enough to do credit to your cooking."

Little Mrs. Denwillow, with a feeling of intense shame, took her seat at the head of the table. Ann removed the covers. The boiled mutton, sadly overdone, was there, it is true; but opposite to her master, Ann had placed a splendid rump steak pie, which she had covered over, to produce the greater effect when disclosed.

Lina cast a grateful glance at her servant, whilst Robert Denwillow said:

"This is famous! But how is it, Ann? I thought it was a boiled mutton."

"Well, sir," said Ann, with a gratified smile, and a slight glance at her mistress, "I thought as master don't like mutton, and the butcher's boy had a fine steak on his tray, I'd make a pie on my own responsibility."

"You had done quite rightly, Ann," said her mistress, "and show good sense."

Surely a merrier "dinner of herbs" never was than that, seasoned as it was by a renewal of love and confidence between the married couple. Mrs. Denwillow often spoke of it afterwards as the commencement of a long and happy life.

Those of the laboring class who are not unacquainted with the state of the coming election, should find themselves into sections, send out agents, and secure homes in sections where landowners are disposed to treat them as they should be treated. Our advice is to resist slavery, and if it cannot be done in any other way, leave those who would tolerate it to attempt to perpetrate it.

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